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OLD FRANK AND HIS STORIES.

STORIES FOR HOLYEVE.

A kinder hearted, better natured old soul, than Frank Kearney, never existed in human form, nor one who could better give the genuine patois to a good old Irish story—nor would seem more in earnest when he was telling it. Poor old man, his stories are at length exhausted, and he now rests quietly beneath the white thorn bush in the old church-yard of *All Saints*, the sweetest and loveliest spot in the place, and withal the best suited for the tenant who inhabits it. He is gone—but not from me, for his silvery hair and his laughter-loving, good humoured countenance, will ever be as fresh to my mind and my memory as are the numerous tales and stories of wonder and achievement with which he stored them in early youth; and which from being narrated to the master's eldest son, who is always peculiarly privileged amongst domestics, prevented him from noticing the change from the grave gaze of awestruck and childish credulity to the ridicule which it was not always in my power in after years to suppress. At any rate he would not see it—so he went on story-telling, and I went on listening and laughing at him to the end of the chapter.

Some years since on the morning of Holyeve, that far-famed epoch of the year in the almanac of the young and hopeful, finding him in a mood well suited to my purpose; I thus addressed him:—

"I hear them saying, Frank, that the old people know a great many tricks to be played this evening that would let a body into the secrets of what's before them; will you supply me with one or two, for I want to try my fortune."

"Why thin, Masther Thomas," answered he, "is it a curiosity you'd have to know what nobody but the ould boy himself could tell you—in truth I'm ashamed of you now—you that knows the differ, to think of bringin' the likes of him about a place, not knowin' what he might do afore he'd lave it;—whisht now, an' don't be talkin' o' the likes at all. 'Deed an' to be sure I do know many an' many a thrick an' many a spell too, that 'ud get a person grate knowledge if they tried them; but somehow or other I never knew good come ov such goings on, so I'll not be after letting you into them—but just to put you off the sarch, I'll tell you what happened undher my own eye twice, an' if that doesn't sober you, why you're a daring boy; an' now listen to me, for the sorra a word o' lie in what I'm goin' to tell you."

"I was once a young boy, livin' there by the edge ov the bog, wid my father an' mother, rest their sows, they're dead this fifty year; but you couldn't see the trace ov the house now, by raison there's a big bog-hole in the place of it—aye, indeed, though there wasn't ten score o' turf cut on the whole place the time I'm spakin' ov; but a few perches down from us, there was livin' one Nick Horan, an ould bothered man, an' a poor man too—an' sure it's poorer he'd be, only for a colleen he had that worked day an' night to keep the bit in his mouth, an' the rag on his back, no matter what became ov herself. Biddy, machree, 'tis you was the good colleen—she had the purtiest and the softest blue eyes that ever set a gossoon's heart asthray; and the light golden hair of her was finer than the finest flax—wirra, wirra! but the one and the other soon got a fading. There wasn't a livin' sowl but our own two houses within two miles distance, an' from Monday mornin' to Saturday night, the never a mortal face she'd see, except the ould people, barrin' my own, unless she wint of a day to the market; an' sure I'd be as long without seein' one but her's and my sister's—her that's livin' down the boreheen there beyant—and 'deed a body might go far enough afore he'd meet such another pair, though the one o' them that's left is ould and withered enough now, any how. But to make a long story short, I loved Biddy like the apple of my eye, and the crathur wasn't far behind me; an' livin' there amost by ourselves, sure it's no wonder if we were as happy as the day is long—an' so we wor, an' so we ought, an' so 'ud any body be that had the heart of sich a crathur to himself, as I had. Well, that's the way we were livin' till Hollyeve came round—an' ochone, ochone! that was the heavy Hollyeve to me; but, avick machree, I'm tiring

you with my ould troubles that nobody cares for but myself, an' that myself didn't think of this many a year afore, so I'll just tell you the story out an' out, an' it's all thrue as I know to my grief. Hollyeve came round, as I told you, an' the two girls laid themselves out to play a thrick that you'll hear; an' to be the more to themselves, they left our house and went to Biddy's father's, that was in bed, poor man, in regard to his being bothered and wake, as I told you. Well, sir, they gets two heads of cabbage out of the bit of a garden, an' each put a mark on her own; an' then after sweepin' the flure an' reddyin' the hearth and fire an' all, they hung up the two heads ov cabbage over the door in the devil's name, Lord between us an' harm, an' whoever opened the door an' took away the head ov cabbage was to be married to whichever ov them that head belonged to; an' whin all that was done, they went into the inside room where the ould man was asleep, an' kept lookin' through an ould blanket they hung in the door-way to see how the thrick 'ud ind. Well, of all the fine nights that ever kem out ov the heavens, that night was one of them—without a word of lie you could pick pins off the road, an' carry a lit rush from Cork to Limerick without it quenching, when what do you think, yer honor, but all ov a suddint the sky got dark, an' the wind began to roar, an' the tunder to clap about them with such a horrid noise ov shoutings an' screechings outside ov the house, that the poor ould man, that didn't hear a sound for five years afore, leaped up out ov his sleep, an' thought the world was come to an ind; an' a woful sight he had afore him, yer honor, whin he got up—there wor the two girls lyin' for dead across the thrashell (*threshold*) an' the fire knocked about the house on all sides, an' the door tore off its hinges, an' a big head of cabbage lyin' in the middle ov the flure. Whin he saw the whole thing, to be shure he guessed what was the matter, and he burst out keening, for he thought they wor dead. By this time the night was *quite* again, an' as soon as the storm wint down, there we hard him, ould as he was, as plain as you hear me now—so we all ran out as quick as we could, an' helped him to quinch the fire, an' recover the girls—dth, dth! will I ever forget that night! The door was burst open, an' a wind came in that whirled the fire all about, an' a big black man, mercy on us, just put in his hands an' caught a hold ov the two heads ov cabbage, and picked out one ov them, and clapped it undher his arm, an' giv the other a kick that rus it up to the collar beam, an' thin turned round, an' laughed at them, an' vanished in a great clap ov tunder—it was Biddy's cabbage that he took—an' that day three months the purtiest colleen in the seven parishes, had the daisies growin' over her;—let your scholarship make out the raison of that: but you'll laugh, so you will, an' I'm not in the humour to be laughed at, for my heart is heavy wid ould troubles—so go away, avick, an' I'll tell you the other story to-morrow."

The old man rose from the bench on which we were sitting, and retired slowly into his house, without giving me an opportunity of evincing to him how much scepticism he had unjustly attributed to me; for never since the days of my farthest childhood was I so horrified or awestruck by a tale of the supernatural as I was then with this, told as it was by a sufferer and eye witness in the terrible events it related—it had, in fine, all the results which he anticipated, for on that Holyeve at least, I left Fortune and Old Nick to themselves. The morrow came, and I sought the ould story-teller to remind him of his promise. He met me in the barn before the door, and laughingly accosted me with—

"Well, yer honor, did I spile your thricks last night? I'm thinkin', after what you hard, you played as little as myself; but I've another story to tell you, an' a quare one too—so if you want to hear more of Holyeve, come an' sit down."

So assuring him of the effects of his tale of yesterday, I took my seat by his side, and he proceeded:—

"In the troubled times, long ago, when martial law was over the country, and a boy darent' budge the length of his nose outside his own door after nightfall, without being brought over the coals for it—there was in this very parish a parcel of as merry boys and girls as ever footed

it on a green; and, to be shure, when Hollyeve was coming round, and the martial law was over them still, they thought it would be a murder entirely, if they were to lose their sport; so a month or six weeks afore it, the boys made an agreement to be as quiet as it was in their nature to be up to Hollyeve at any rate, to get off the martial law in time for the fun. So peaceable a parish for all that time wasn't to be had in all Ireland; a collection of all the rusty pikes and useless guns was made up for the priest, ould Father Coffey, rest his sowl in glory, he's dead this many a year, an' he didn't lave the like of himself behind; but as I was sayin', you couldn't hear a stir in the parish all that time, an' at length Father Coffey went to the magistrates with his kish o' arms to beg off the martial law for that night, at any rate; but, bedad, they were too cute for him, an' wouldn't do it—so the poor Father had to come back to us wid the bad news, an' the never a bit sorrier we were than he was himself. Well, sir, still an' all, the girls wouldn't stay at home—for they said to themselves that shure no yeoman, if he was an Irishman, at all, at all, would trouble a colleen for only goin' out for a bit of natural fun on Hollyeve: so three o' them gathered with ould Mary Lennon's daughters in the three old stone-walls at the butt o' the hill below; but they were a bran new house then, that Nick Lennon built for his ould mother and sisters that very year when he went to Kilman, to Mr. Cosgrove's; so they met there, an' the five 'girls' all went out and washed their shifts in the devil's name in the mill-stream, an' brought them in an' put them to the fire to dry, an' whoever came in an' turned them, you know, was to be their sweet-heart. Well, sir, they were all standing round the fire finishing the spell, and thinkin' of no mischief at all, at all, when they heard a terrible clatter over their heads, an' before they could run from the spot, down came the new brick chimney that was only finished that day three weeks, an' that was the pride and beauty of the whole parish—down it came, sir, slashing the coals about—burning one girl's shins, and smashing another's, and tumbling the chairs about, so that it was well even they got out with their lives—for they all thought, your honour, that the ould boy was comin' down the chimney, as there was no doubt he was. They all ran out—but there was another fright afore them outside, for the minute the door opened they saw five white figures vanish down the boreen—so they couldn't tell, for the lives of them, whether it was better to go into the devil or out to the ghosts, and they all began to shout millia murder, until they brought down a parcel of yeoman that was patrolling the country to see was all quiet. When the yeomen heard what they had to say, an' all about the five ghosts,

"Humph, (says one of them) I'll be bound they were the images of your five sweethearts that the devil frightened away—what do you think yourselves, now? But I'll warrant I'll coax them back to you to finish the trick; spur men, after the ghosts."

"And away they all galloped down the boreen the same way that the ghosts vanished. Well, sir, the girls all ran up to the top of the hill to see what would come of such a chase; an' bedad they weren't there a minute when the five figures swept by them all in white—an' shure enough they were the images of their own five sweethearts, and the yeomen all in pursuit after them. Stone walls were nothing to them—I'm blest but I hear 'twas the finest steeple chase ever seen in this country, for the noise they made brought all the neighbours to their doors to see the fools of yeomen following the wind—an' of course a field behind it. On they went over walls, and drains, and ditches, leaving a horse and man at every second leap they made, until at last there was only three of them when the five figures vanished at the door of a shebeen house, near a mile off from where they started; but that wasn't enough for the yeomen—so they lit off their horses and burst in the door, and what do you think but they found the five boys lying all fast and sound asleep in their shirts, by the fire-side, on a bed of heath."

"Get up you vagabonds," says the head of the yeomen, "get up," says he, "and account for what brings ye here, and why you knocked down the woman's chimney;" and with that he set to wetting them with the flat of his

sword until the poor boys wakened and begun to stare about them, not knowing of course where in the world they were, or what was the matter at all, at all.

"Arrah, then," says one of the gossoons, when he got wide awake, "what thricks is it your playin' on us bringin' us here out of our warm beds—musha it's a shame for you."

"Why then, the sorra take your impudence," says the yeoman, "why did you bring us here at last—when you wanted to sham sleep on us couldn't you do it anywhere else without bringing us such a wild-goose chase? but you'll suffer for it."

"Well, my dear sir, the poor boys could neither make head nor tail of what they heard—and small blame to them, as you'll hear in the end; but what surprised them more than anything was, that the man of the house accused the yeoman of breaking into his cabin while he was asleep, and bringing the boys in, for he offered to give his book oath there were no boys there when he went to bed; but all wouldn't do, and the poor boys were tied together and brought off to the next town to be tried for breaking the martial law by being away from home after nightfall, and moreover for throwing down a chimney. In a few days the trial came on, and after the yeomen swore all they could, the boys were called on for their defence; and indeed they hadn't much fear of what was to come, for a better defence couldn't be than they had—first came their fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters, and all, and swore that they saw them in bed that night after eating their supper, and that they didn't leave the houses that night, nor couldn't; and the man of the shebeen-house helped, for he swore they didn't enter his house that night; and the boys themselves gave the quarest account of any, for they left it on their sows that they didn't know at all, at all, how they got into the shebeen-house, barrin' they were carried there in their sleep, for that the last thing they could remember that night was, that they went to bed in their own houses, and when they waked they found themselves in the shebeen-house with the yeomen beating them. What do you think, sir, but when they said that, the judge, and jury, and all, instead of being frightened as they ought at such a terrible thing, burst out laughing, and would hear no more by no manner of means, but insisted that it was all nonsense, and, without more ado, sentenced the poor fellows to a year's imprisonment each, and declared that if they had the girls they'd treat them in the same way—so now you see what power that spell had to take the poor crathers up out of their beds unknown to themselves and whisk them that way over the whole country without ever wakening them, and then lay them inside of a cabin without ever opening the door; for it is plain, you see, that they were coming to turn the shifts after being called in the name of the ould boy, until the yeomen broke the spell, particularly because they were all married after to them five girls—indeed I hard it whispered among the boys that they got a hint the girls were to meet that night, and that they all made an agreement to steal out and give them a fright, and that one of them got up on the chimney to look down and see what they were at, and that the chimney broke and fell down by reason that it was so new, and that when the yeomen pursued them they got unknownst into the shebeen house through a back window, and all that sort of thing, but that was only to stop people's mouths, for every knowledgeable person knew right well how it came about, though they didn't like to say much about it, as who would? but you may believe whichever side of the story you like best, and indeed I'm thinkin' I'm not far astray as to which of them will appear to you the most likely."

M.C.

SCULPTURE.

Of the several classes of the fine arts, that of sculpture is the most simple in its execution, and the least exposed to those inroads which presumption and quackery are ever making. It is an art that can never become very common: the very nature of the material, the actual expense of marble, will for ever prevent it from being degraded by common-place practitioners. An artist in this walk, must have attained to some degree of repute, and be